

# NXT LVL Up – May 19, 2023: They're At It Again

## NXT LVL Up

Date: May 19, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Blake Howard, Byron Saxton

We're getting closer to Battleground and that could be quite the shakeup for NXT. That is something LVL Up could use, as the show tends to be in a rather similar mold a lot of the time. It might be helpful for the wrestlers around here, but that doesn't make things all that entertaining. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

### Eddy Thorpe vs. Kale Dixon

Feeling out process to start with Thorpe's headlock not working all that well. Back up and Dixon runs him over with a shoulder, followed by some forearms to the spine. The neck crank and chinlock go on until Thorpe is up with a dragon screw legwhip. A Saito suplex out of the corner gets two on Dixon and the jumping elbow finishes him off at 4:52.

**Rating:** C. Thorpe continues to beat up lower level competition and Dixon continues to be Dixon. In other words, it was exactly what you would have expected from these two on this stage. It wouldn't surprise me to see Thorpe getting a push on the main NXT show, but it might take some more seasoning to get him ready.

Kelani Jordan and Wendy Choo are ready to team together against Elektra Lopez and Lola Vice. Apparently karma is a

bi...scuit.

### Kelani Jordan/Wendy Choo vs. Elektra Lopez/Lola Vice

Lopez powers Jordan around without much effort to start and it's Vice coming in for a double shoulder. Back up and Jordan takes Vice over to Choo for an assisted moonsault. A tornado DDT hits Vice but she brings Lopez in off a blind tag to take over. Jordan gets knocked hard into the corner and a gutbuster sets up a body vice to stay on the ribs. A quick kick away allows the tag off to Choo as everything breaks down. The Snooze Button gives Choo the pin on Vice at 5:36.

**Rating:** C. I can see why WWE wants to push Jordan, who has the impressive athleticism and appeal to become something down the line. She needs experience though and getting her feet wet on this show is a good start. Jordan has a long way to go, but at least she is getting started with a solid base.

### Dante Chen vs. Luca Crusifino

They fight over a lockup to start as we get a LET'S GO LAWYER chant. Chen goes for the hammerlock to take over before some armdrags into the armbar have Luca in more trouble. Back up and Luca grabs a neckbreaker for two, followed by the double arm crank. With that broken up, Chen hammers away in the corner but the threat of the double chop sends Luca outside. Luca loads up the briefcase but when it's taken away, a thumb to the eye lets him roll up Chen for the pin at 5:15.

**Rating:** C. I'm sorry what now? A young up and comer beat Chen? I'm not sure how to handle this but it's nice to see for a change. As usual, Chen is fine enough in the ring and certainly not bad, but he has such a history of running people over and I do not get the point having him beat so many people without actually going anywhere. That being said, Luca is a bit of a weird case and I could go for having him around a bit more in the future.

**Overall Rating:** C-. It says a lot when your star power is comprised of Thorpe, Choo and Chen, which isn't exactly top level talent in NXT. The wrestling was completely watchable and the show is less than thirty minutes from beginning to end so it isn't like you feel you're wasting your time. In other words, this was the weaker end of LVL Up and that's not exactly thrilling stuff.

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## **NXT – May 23, 2023: They've Got Me**

### **NXT**

Date: May 23, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Booker T.

It's the go home show for Battleground and that means we need to finalize the Women's Title match. The tournament semifinals will take care of that tonight and there are a few combinations. Other than that, we'll probably get one more hard push towards Carmelo Hayes vs. Bron Breakker. Let's get

to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Lyra Valkyria, Cora Jade, Tiffany Stratton and Roxanne Perez all promise to win the title.

Women's Title Tournament Semifinals: Lyra Valkyria vs. Cora Jade

Valkyria starts fast with a small package for two and a suplex is good for the same. Jade manages to tie her in the ropes or some chops, followed by a kick to the back of the head for two. The chinlock doesn't last long as Valkyria is up with a bunch of strikes, only to get caught in a guillotine choke of all things. Back up and Valkyria hits a quick spinning kick to the head for the pin at 3:49.

**Rating:** C. It was nice while it lasted but it didn't last very long. Valkyria winning is a little surprising but I can go with the idea of pushing someone new to go after the title. The ending really was as out of nowhere as it seemed, with commentary saying they barely even saw Valkyria land the kick in the first place. Not bad, but almost shockingly short.

Post match Jade hits her in the knee before adding in a kendo stick shot for a bonus.

Ilja Dragunov jumps Dijak in the back and tries to crush him with a garage door. Referees intervene but Dijak is banged up.

Axiom vs. Dabba-Kato

Axiom goes for the knee to start before scoring with an enziguri. A chokeslam is broken up and Axiom goes for the leg again. Kato powers him around but a dragon screw legwhip over the rope slows it down again. Back up and a heck of a clothesline cuts Axiom off though and a sitout chokebomb gives Kato the pin at 1:57.

Post match Kato stays on Axiom but Reggie comes in to low bridge him to the floor. Axiom isn't sure about this.

Tony D'Angelo is being interrogated and wants to get straight to the point. The officer wants to know why D'Angelo's name keeps coming up in various investigations. They even have a video from an informant (which we can't see) but D'Angelo denies it's him. Another officer comes in and says they have more information. More on this later, though D'Angelo goes to listen at the door.

Video on Bron Breakker vs. Carmelo Hayes, with Hayes taking the NXT Title at Stand & Deliver. Breakker then went full evil and has attacked Hayes/Hayes' friend Trick Williams on the way to their rematch at Battleground. This feels like an epic showdown and that's what it needs to be on this stage and at this level.

Here is Gallus for a chat. They aren't happy about the other teams, such as Tony D'Angelo/Stacks and the Creed Brothers coming after the titles but here are the Creeds to interrupt. The Creeds waste no time in issuing the challenge but the match isn't official. Instead the brawl is on, with Joe Coffey getting involved too. Stacks runs in to even things up and Gallus is cleared out.

Wes Lee isn't sure what is going on around here and it feels like everyone is coming for the title. Maybe he should just stop letting people get close to him. Cue Tyler Bate to say they're still friends but he has to worry about Eddy Thorpe tonight. Lee isn't convinced.

### Eddy Thorpe vs. Tyler Bate

Wes Lee is on commentary. Bate works on the wrist to start but Thorpe is back up with a headlock of his own. The technical off continues as Bate sweeps the leg for one and slides between the legs for an early standoff. A small package gives Bate two but a kick to the back cuts him off. Thorpe grabs a

seated abdominal stretch but Bate powers up for the middle rope elbow to the face. The standing shooting star press gets two and Bate runs him over again, setting up the Tyler Driver 97 for the pin at 4:58.

**Rating:** C+. That's a weird way to have Thorpe lose his first match as he had been getting a nice start to his NXT career. There is no shame in losing to Bate, but I wasn't expecting Thorpe's first loss to be so...basic I guess you would call it. The action was good though and that's about all you needed to have here in such a short match.

Post match Joe Gacy comes in and takes out Bate and Lee, who can't quite make a save.

Lyra Valkyria's knee is bruised and swollen but she's ready or Battleground. She wants Roxanne Perez in the finals because Perez is the best in NXT.

#### Noam Dar vs. Nathan Frazer

Non-title. Dar works on the wrist to start and is quickly reversed into a headlock. Back up and Frazer starts dodging anything Dar throws at him to increase the frustration. Frazer kicks him out to the floor, with Dar needing to be near the Heritage Cup, as we take a break. We come back with Dar breaking up a springboard to take over and stomp down on the arm.

Frazer is able to strike away, setting up an AJ Styles springboard moonsault into a reverse DDT. Dar tries to break up the springboard but Frazer head fakes him and hits a springboard ax handle. A swinging suplex gets two but a Phoenix splash misses. Dar's ankle lock is broken up so he settles for kicking Frazer in the head. A cross armbreaker has Frazer in trouble until he stacks Dar up for two and the break.

Frazer gets two off a superkick and they chop it out. Dar hits

a heck of a spinning elbow to the face for two as Dragon Lee comes out to admire the cup. The distraction sends Dar outside to check on said cup, allowing Frazer to hit a suicide dive. Back in and the Phoenix splash finishes for Frazer at 12:55.

**Rating:** B. Good back and forth stuff here with Dar being much more tolerable when he isn't talking for days on end. Frazer is someone who can wrestle an exciting style and is always close enough to a win that it isn't a stretch to see him get a pin. Now just give him something to do already.

Frazer and Lee admire the cup as Dar freaks out.

Ilja Dragunov is ready to hurt Dijak at Battleground. Cue Dijak and the fight is on, with the locker room having to split them up.

Carmelo Hayes returned to Boston and got to do a media tour for Battleground. It's always cool to see a wrestler getting this kind of treatment.

### Hank Walker vs. Tank Ledger

They're partners/friends/opponents so they even come out together for a unique change. They go straight with the brawling to start with Ledger sending him into the corner. Something like a cartwheel splash gets two but Walker hits him in the face. Walker hits a splash in the corner and stereo crossbodies gives Walker the pin at 2:44.

Post match Bron Breaker runs in to spear them both down.

The Creeds thank Stacks for the help earlier. He offers to help them out at Battleground, but the Creeds have this. No offense taken, and Stacks/Tony D'Angelo can even have the first shot at the Creeds. Stacks seems pleased.

Here is Gigi Dolin for a chat. Dolin talks about coming from a broken home where there was a lot of addiction. She has trouble letting people in but she did it with Jacy Jayne, who

turned on her. Jayne pops up to say she can't stand any more of this emo talk. Jayne talks about how she carried Toxic Attraction but Dolin knows she is in Jayne's head. That doesn't work for Jayne, who brings up Dolin's little brother. Dolin just points out the fact that they're 1-1 but Jayne accuses her of pandering to her social media fan base. They can end this, but let's do it inside a weaponized cage. The match, and more catty insults, are on.

Luca Crusifino promises legal recourse against Von Wagner tonight. That's a bold threat.

Video on the Heritage Cup rules and Dragon Lee challenging Noam Dar.

Dar tries to get Oro Mensah's help against Lee but that's a no. Lash Legend and Jakara Jackson come in to laugh at Dar.

#### Luca Crusifino vs. Von Wagner

Mr. Stone is here with Wagner, who wastes no time in sending Luca outside. Back in and Luca avoids a charge in the corner and stomps away. A hiptoss neckbreaker gives Luca two and he sends Wagner outside. That lets Luca go after Stone, who has the picture of the baby in his pocket. That's WAY too far for Wagner, who runs Luca over and hammers away in the ropes until it's a DQ at 2:38.

Post match Wagner powerbombs Luca onto the announcers' table, as Stone freaks out.

Tony D'Angelo is still being interrogated and this time, he gets arrested.

#### Women's Title Tournament Semifinals: Tiffany Stratton vs. Roxanne Perez

Perez has to jump up to get a test of strength to start but Stratton spins around and gymnastics herself to a standoff. A sunset flip gives Perez two and she starts cranking on the



arm. Stratton reverses into a wristlock of her own but gets ankles scissors to the floor. Back in and Stratton pulls her off the top for a crash and we take a break.

We come back with Perez dropkicking her to the floor. Perez nails the suicide dive, followed by the suicide dive for a bonus. Back in and Stratton rolls through a high crossbody, only to miss the triple jump moonsault. Perez hammers away with right hands but Stratton hits a Sky High for two of her own. They go up top with Perez snapping off a super hurricanrana, followed by a Russian legsweep for two. We seem to pause for Stratton to adjust her top, allowing her to hit the Regal Roll. The Prettiest Moonsault Ever sends Stratton to Battleground at 9:41.

**Rating:** B-. This was the good match you would expect from two of the more talented women in NXT. Perez is probably the most decorated woman in the tournament so beating her is quite the prize in its own right for Stratton. Valkyria vs. Stratton might not be the most hyped up match, but it could go either way and that's always a good feeling to have.

Battleground rundown.

Lyra Valkyria and Tiffany Stratton talk trash to each other...and the masked woman runs in to jump Roxanne Perez. The masked woman runs off before Valkyria can get to her.

Here is Dijak to sign the hold harmless papers for his match with Ilja Dragunov, only to be jumped by Dragunov. Dijak fights back and sends him into the barricade before signing. Dragunov fights back up and signs as well before kicking the stairs carrying Dijak down. Dragunov jumps onto him and poses on the steps to end the show.

Actually hang on as we get one more video on Battleground, complete with clips of various WWF/E shows in Lowell, Massachusetts over the years for a rather cool touch. They're making it feel important so well done with putting together an

awesome video.

**Overall Rating:** B. They brought the hard push towards Battleground here and that is what matters most. I'm a lot more interested in what happens at the show now than I was coming in so they have certainly done something right. There was also enough good wrestling here to make the two hours go by quickly, so now we should be in for a solid night on Sunday as NXT gets to hit the road again.

### Results

Lyra Valkyria b. Cora Jade – Spinning kick to the head

Dabba-Kato b. Axiom – Sitout chokebomb

Tyler Bate b. Eddy Thorpe – Tyler Driver 97

Nathan Frazer b. Noam Dar – Phoenix splash

Hank Walker b. Tank Ledger – Crossbody

Luca Crusifino b. Von Wagner via DQ when Wagner attacked in the ropes

Tiffany Stratton b. Roxanne Perez – Prettiest Moonsault Ever

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# NXT – May 9, 2023: What Do We Do Now?

## NXT

Date: May 9, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Booker T.

Things are going to be different around here as the Draft took away so many big name NXT stars. That means some spots are going to have to be filled, but in addition we have Battleground coming up in less than three weeks. We're going to be in for a heck of a balancing act, including the Women's Title tournament. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We open with Indi Hartwell vacating the Women's Title due to her main roster promotion last week. A tournament was announced and chaos ensued.

The eight participants in the tournament are in the aisle and we're starting fast.

Women's Title Tournament First Round: Tiffany Stratton vs. Gigi Dolin

Stratton gets a promo before the match, complaining about being in the tournament and saying she needs this like she needs a pair of fat jeans. A clothesline doesn't work for Dolin as Stratton Matrixes away, only to have her arm kicked out. Dolin hits a Bronco Buster in the corner but misses a second, allowing Stratton to start in on Dolin's bad shoulder.

Stratton takes her down by the arm for two but Dolin manages a

whip into the corner for two. Stratton's snapmare out of the corner sets up a missed...I'm not sure, but she's fine enough to block the abdominal stretch bomb. A Regal Roll sets up the Prettiest Moonsault Ever to finish Dolin at 4:30.

**Rating:** C. Stratton has to be a favorite to win the title, or at least be in the final, so it makes sense to have her win here. Dolin isn't about to win here, though I was a bit relieved that Jacy Jayne didn't interfere here. Let Stratton get her win to start the tournament right, as she very well could be the next champion.

We have brackets for the tournament:

Tiffany Stratton

Jacy Jayne/Roxanne Perez

Lyra Valkyria

Kiana James

Fallon Henley

Cora Jade

The Dyad is ready for their Tag Team Title shot but Joe Gacy is following Ava's advice: he won't be at ringside.

Earlier today at the barber shop, Trick Williams says he's ready for Bron Breaker, with Carmelo Hayes thanking him for standing up to Breaker last week. Williams is ready for tonight alone, which is cool with Hayes.

Tag Team Titles: Gallus vs. Dyad

Dyad, with Ava, is defending, so Joe Coffey is here with the champs to even it out. Gallus takes over on Reid's arm to start but Fowler comes in for a clothesline to take over. It's back to Mark, who gets kicked in the face, setting up an enziguri into a Downward Spiral for two.

We take a break and come back with Mark fighting up on Reid

and bringing Wolfgang in to clean house. A double Rock Bottom gives Gallus two but Ava offers a distraction, allowing Reid to get in a DDT. Cue Ivy Mile to go after Ava, allowing Gallus to hit the big boot/flapjack combination to finish Fowler at 11:00.

**Rating:** C+. Fine enough match, but what matters is that the Dyad didn't win the titles. maybe they tie this into Gacy not being there and we get a rematch later, but anything with less Schism is a good thing. The tag division isn't exactly deep right now, but Tony D'Angelo and Stacks would be fine. As for this match, it was fine enough for a title defense, though not quite some instant classic.

Gallus is off to drink.

Thea Hail wished she was drafted but Javier Bernal comes in to mock her. Duke Hudson comes in to say that Hail did well on her exam. Bernal thinks Hudson has a big plan, but Hudson says not so fast. He almost calls it Duke University again before a match is made for later.

A hooded figure is watching the various women who have been attacked in recent months. No word on who it is, but having that turn into something would be a good idea.

#### Javier Bernal vs. Duke Hudson

Thea Hail is here with Hudson, who shoves Bernal out to the floor to start. Hudson gets in a slam back inside but Bernal knocks him down for a breather. The chinlock doesn't work and some right hands to the head trigger Hudson Dukes Up, including a side slam. A Razor's Edge finishes Bernal at 3:54.

**Rating:** C. Hudson has come a long way in just a few months and I'm curious to see where this whole thing goes. You could have a story of him trying to take down Chase U or he could be telling the truth. That makes things all the more interesting, and that's more than I would have bet on with him.

Mr. Stone and Von Wagner talk about their favorite foods until Stone whips out the picture of a baby who appears to have undergone brain surgery from last week. Wagner doesn't want to talk about it and beats up Luca Crusifino for asking about it.

The Creeds want the next Tag Team Title shot and Gallus seems ready to fight.

### Damon Kemp vs. Eddy Thorpe

Kemp takes him down to start but Thorpe is back with a headlock takeover. Back up and Kemp runs him over, only to get elbowed in the face. Thorpe's half crab sends Kemp over to the rope so it's a German suplex to drop Kemp again. A jumping elbow drop finishes Kemp at 4:59.

**Rating:** C-. I wasn't feeling this one as they weren't exactly hitting on all cylinders out there. Thorpe winning is no surprise as he seems to be getting a strong start, though something other than a jumping elbow drop to finish people off might be advisable. Other than that, I'd still like to see more of Kemp, but this seems to be his ceiling for the time being.

Kiana James is ready for the hardest first round match in the Women's Title tournament. She accomplishes her goals though and will do it again.

Bron Breaker says he hasn't changed his attitude, but rather he just stopped caring. He carried the NXT flag for over a year and what did it get him? Tonight, he's going to hurt Trick Williams and put him in the same hospital he put Carmelo Hayes in.

### Dijak vs. Ilja Dragunov

Dragunov chops away to start so Dijak tells him to do it again. That's not a good idea, as Dragunov chops him into the corner, setting up a middle rope knee drop. Dijak is fine

enough to toss him off the top and out to the floor for the crash. Back in and Dragunov fights back up and slugs away, only to get caught with the Cyclone Boot for two. It's time to grab a chair and after, after throwing the referee down, Dijak gets disqualified for using said chair on Dragunov at 4:23.

**Rating:** C+. I think you know one of the matches we'll be seeing at Battleground now and I could certainly go for these two beating the fire out of each other in some kind of a stipulation match. Dijak is slowly starting to find himself again after such a long run of nothing and Dragunov works well with anyone. This is going to give us the ticked off Dragunov though, and that is just going to end in more violence.

Post match Dijak crushes Dragunov with the steps and stands on them for some choking.

Tyler Bate is meditating when Wes Lee comes in to thank him for the save last week. Lee says Bate is up next...and Bate wakes up from his meditation with no idea Lee was there. Everything is fine and he's ready for his match.

Dani Palmer met Tank Ledger/Hank Walker and Brooks Jensen/Josh Briggs. The teams agreed to a respectful match.

### Charlie Dempsey vs. Tyler Bate

Drew Gulak and Wes Lee are here too. Bate slips out of a hold to start and snaps off a suplex, only to have to flip out of a Boston crab attempt. Back up and they hit heads, giving us a double knockdown. Bate is up first with an airplane spin, but here is Joe Gacy for an argument with Lee. A big dive drops Gacy and Gulak, with the diving Bate going back in to hit Bop and Bang on Dempsey. Not that it matters as Gacy gets in a cheap shot on Bate to knock him silly. Dempsey grabs a dragon suplex for the pin at 3:27.

**Rating:** C+. There are a few places to go with this one and I wouldn't be surprised if it ends with Bate winning the title

in a four way at Battleground. Bate has needed something more to do and while the meditation stuff is fine for him, some success would be even better. Dempsey as the evil wrestling machine works as well, and you can see a lot of the Villain in him.

Carmelo Hayes is on his way to help Trick Williams.

Noam Dar interrupts a Dragon Lee interview to invite him to be a guest on Supernova Sessions.

### Brooks Jensen/Josh Briggs vs. Hank Walker/Tank Ledger

Walker and Jensen brawl on the floor to start before some double teaming takes over on Briggs inside. Jensen comes in and gets shouldered down hard but it's back to Briggs for a big boot. We pause for Ledger to spit out a tooth (he puts it in his singlet), followed by a Hart Attack to finish him off at 2:41.

Respect is shown post match.

Video on Lyra Valkyria.

Nathan Frazer talks about how international NXT has become but focuses on Noam Dar.

### Women's Title Tournament First Round: Kiana James vs. Lyra Valkyria

They trade rollups to start with neither getting very far. Another rollup gives Valkyria two but she gets sent hard into the corner. We take a break and come back with James crushing the ribs but Valkyria knocks her away. A middle rope dropkick puts James down and Valkyria sends her outside for a dive. Back in and a suplex gives Valkyria two but James' powerbomb gets the same. Valkyria shrugs it off and hits a spinning kick to the face for the pin at 8:50.

**Rating:** C+. They were working hard enough here and I'm a bit



surprised by the result. James has been more prominently featured than Valkyria, who has yet to really find herself in NXT. Going with her into the next round is a way to go and she's more polished in the ring than James, but it was still somewhat surprising.

Gallus is drinking at the bar when Tony D'Angelo and Stacks interrupt, saying they want a title shot. Joe Coffey isn't having that but threats are made. Gallus' friends get up and D'Angelo/Stacks are smart enough to leave.

### Bron Breaker vs. Trick Williams

They fight to the floor in a hurry, with Breaker having to suplex him onto the announcers' table to stop an early flurry. Back in and Breaker puts on a seated abdominal stretch but Williams fights up with a dropkick. A jumping clothesline drops Breaker again and a Rock Bottom gives Williams two. Breaker has had it with this and spears him down, setting up the Recliner for the win at 6:15.

**Rating:** C+. What else were you expecting here? Breaker is a machine about to get a title shot against Williams' best friend so of course he's going to crush Williams here. There wasn't much else that could have been done, though Williams gave it all he had. He deserves more credit than he gets, as he has turned a basic hype man spot into something pretty good.

Post match Breaker goes for him again but Carmelo Hayes comes in. Breaker spears him out of the air (that looked GREAT) and grabs the title to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Much like Raw, this show felt like a chance for the bosses to go "ok, what do we have now?" while running the tournament matches to fill in a lot of the space. What we got was good enough, but it felt like they were trying to fill it in as well as they could, which isn't exactly easy given that they lost almost 20 names. Still though, good

enough show, but they need to come up with something better to fill up the show.

### Results

Tiffany Stratton b. Gigi Dolin – Prettiest Moonsault Ever

Gallus b. Dyad – Flapjack/big boot combination to Fowler

Duke Hudson b. Javier Bernal – Razor's Edge

Eddy Thorpe b. Damon Kemp – Jumping elbow drop

Ilja Dragunov b. Dijak via DQ when Dijak used a chair

Charlie Dempsey b. Tyler Bate – Dragon suplex

Brooks Jensen/Josh Briggs b. Tank Ledger/Hank Walker – Hart Attack to Ledger

Lyra Valkyria b. Kiana James – Spinning kick to the face

Bron Breaker b. Trick Williams – Recliner

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# NXT LVL Up – April 28, 2023: Where Did He Come From?

## NXT LVL Up

Date: April 28, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Blake Howard, Byron Saxton

The first night of the Draft is over and that is not going to mean a thing around here. As usual the show was taped far in advance of this one and that doesn't mean much in the way of major developments. Other than NXT getting some names called up and some LVL Up stars taking their place, this show is more or less immune from the Draft. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

## Tyler Bate vs. Luca Crusifino

Ok that's not someone I was expecting. Luca offers Bate a business card to start as commentary talks about what a big deal it is to have Bate here (yeah pretty much). Bate takes him down and stretches the legs before luring him in with the business card to over stretch Crusifino even more. Crusifino manages to take him down and grabs a quickly broken chinlock. Bate is back with the long form airplane spin, setting up the Tyler Driver 97 for the pin at 5:11.

**Rating:** C. This is the kind of thing LVL Up needs to do: throw out someone who isn't working on the regular NXT show that week and have them work a short match. Bate being here made the show feel more important, or at least interesting, and it isn't like having him work five minutes is going to hurt anything. Nothing match of course, but Bate being there is enough of a benefit.

Hank Walker and Tank Ledger are old friends (they met over some nice meatloaf) and now it's time to face the Dyad ("the green beans of the NXT tag team division").

### Ivy Nile vs. Lola Vice

They fight over a rather aggressive lockup to start until Nile rides her to the mat. Vice is right back with a kick to the ribs, followed by a running hip attack in the corner. A double arm crank is broken up though and Nile kicks her down again. Nile grabs a gutwrench suplex and the Diamond Chain Lock knocks Vice out cold for the win at 4:18.

**Rating:** C+. Vice has all of the tools in the world to be something, including the charisma that makes her feel like a star. Throw in the MMA background and all of the potential is right there. On the other hand you have Nile, who still feels like she could be something in the division as soon as she is given the chance.

### Dyad vs. Hank Walker/Tank Ledger

The rest of Schism is here with the Dyad. Walker shrugs off Reid's headlock to start and sends Reid flying into the corner. Everything breaks down and it's off to Walker to slam Fowler. Reid comes back in to whip Ledger hard into the corner but the chinlock doesn't last long. Walker fights up and brings in Ledger to clean house, including a hard shoulder for two on Reid. Everything breaks down again and a wheelbarrow into a reverse X Factor (cool) plants Reid for two more. Walker is pulled outside and the double Codebreaker finishes Ledger at 7:06.

**Rating:** C+. The match got a little more time than most matches around here and it made things that much better. Other than that, the Dyad got to showcase themselves a bit, even if they do not seem likely to be long for the promotion after their recent release requests. Ledger and Walker could be decent as a working man team, though that isn't likely to work all that

well with Josh Briggs and Brooks Jensen around.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Better show this week, with the bigger names helping move things on a bit. You have Bate and the Dyad as bigger than usual names, plus the usual offering in the women's match. That makes for a slightly better than average show, but as usual it is absolutely nothing that you need to see.

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# **NXT LVL Up – March 3, 2023: Abso-Luca-Lutely**

## **NXT LVL Up**

Date: March 3, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Blake Howard

I'm starting to enjoy having no idea what to expect from this show. It's such a guessing game of what you are going to get

to see and that makes for some entertaining sub half hours. You never know what NXT is going to throw out there on this show and that offers some fun. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

### Lyra Valkyria vs. Tatum Paxley

They fight over a lockup to start with Valkyria taking her down for a rollup. Back up and Valkyria works on an armbar, leaving Paxley frustrated. Valkyria can't keep the arms down with a test of strength so Paxley catapults her into the corner. The chinlock goes on for a bit before an elbow gives Paxley two. Back up and Valkyria sends her hard into the corner, setting up the high crossbody for two. Valkyria has had it with Paxley and kicks her in the head for the pin at 5:24.

**Rating:** C. Paxley is getting better and better in the ring so this was a decent enough match. What matters here is making Valkyria look stronger, as she could become something around here. That's the kind of buildup this show can do well, but for some reason they don't do it very often.

Newcomer Luca Crusifino is a rather smiley lawyer who is ready to make his debut. Will he be great? "Abso-luca-lutely." I think I like this guy.

### Luca Crusifino vs. Dante Chen

They go technical to start with Luca grabbing a headlock but getting reversed into a headscissors on the mat. Some armdrags into an armbar have Luca down but he's right back with a neckbreaker for two. Another neckbreaker is countered but Chen walks into a Samoan drop for two more. Chen makes the comeback with a clothesline and some rapid fire shots to the ribs, setting up the double chop to finish Luca at 4:47.

**Rating:** C-. Commentary made mention of new wrestlers facing Chen, but WHY DO ALL OF THEM HAVE TO LOSE TO HIM??? Chen has never been anything in NXT but he beats just about every new wrestler that comes around here for whatever reason. This is one of the few running traditions around here and it makes such little sense when you think about it for that long.

### Oro Mensah vs. Eddy Thorpe

Feeling out to process to start with Mensah's armbar not getting him very far. Back up and Thorpe chops away before a fisherman's neckbreaker gets two. Mensah fights back and snaps off a suplex, only to miss a kick to the head. Thorpe kicks him in the head and gets two off a Saito suplex. The seated abdominal stretch doesn't last long as Mensah comes back with a springboard standing moonsault. A springboard kick to the chest drops Thorpe for two but the Lionsault misses. Thorpe nails the implant DDT for the pin at 6:52.

**Rating:** C+. So Oro Mensah, who has been on at least a few important NXT shows and is even a former NXT UK Tag Team Champion, can't win a match but Dante Chen goes on a winning streak against newcomers? I know neither of them mean anything, but I do not get the logic here at all. Thorpe is still looking good in his first few matches, but it is just a small step on a long path.

Respect is shown to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. The Dante Chen Experiment continues and that made up a third of this week's show. Other than that, Valkyria and Thorpe got some nice wins and should be boosted up a bit, which is where this show can be valuable. If NXT ever acknowledged that this show existed, it might matter even more. It won't happen, but it might help. Not as much as facing Chen though of course, because no one can survive that.

### Results

Lyra Valkyria b. Tatum Paxley – Spinning kick to the head

Dante Chen b. Luca Crusifino – Double chop  
Eddy Thorpe b. Oro Mensah – Implant DDT

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